

# DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

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**Date:** 8/18/2017

**Race 5:** Cal-bred Alw/N1X contested at 8-furlongs on turf.

**Post:** 6:00 pm PDT

## OVERVIEW

We've got a very competitive entry-level allowance for Cal-breds going one mile on the lawn. The rails are set at zero-feet, so we should have a fairly run race, especially since there seems to be enough speed to ensure an honest pace. A full field of twelve has been entered, so there should also be plenty of value if you can sniff out the winner!

**#1 DR. TROUTMAN (15/1)** is a 3-year-old colt who has tried this condition/distance twice at Santa Anita to no avail. That said, he did run a very nice third in the Snow Chief at 53/1, so there is some ability here—but note that that race was at 9-furlongs while today he's only going a mile. Still, he's not impossible here, especially since he can just sit off the pace while saving all the ground—and note that he nearly broke his maiden here last fall when going a mile, getting to the winner late and just missing by a head. He looks sneaky in here, especially after the failed blinkers experiment (since the hood comes off today). GRADE: B.

**#2 POPULAR KID (7/2)** ran too good to lose last time when setting a very quick pace going 8.5-furlongs before getting run down late. It was his first start as a gelding while coming off a May freshening, so he's certainly eligible for improvement, especially since he's cutting back in distance and has shown in past races that he doesn't need the lead—hence the removal of blinkers today. I suspect Kent was just trying to steal the race last time, while today, I'm expecting him to be a bit more patient, tracking what should be a quick pace before seeing if this 3-year-old can show some kick in the lane. Also note that Keith Desormeaux is very solid with second-off-the-bench runners. GRADE: A.

**#3 ACCOUNTABILITY (12/1)** has plenty of tactical speed, so he'll be in the vanguard early, pushing the pace, especially with the re-addition of blinkers. He's had four tries at this level, and even though he's run well, he's had a tendency to give it up in the lane. The blinkers should help keep him focused during the stretch run, but they'll also increase his early speed—and in a race that projects to have a quick pace, I'm not sure that's a good thing. That said, he has run races fast enough to win this if you're a believer—I just don't think the race sets up all that well for him, and note that he was right there with Popular Kid last time on a hot pace, but that foe got the measure of him. GRADE: C.

**#4 PACKIN HEAT (12/1)** has one really good race at this level and distance, and that was because he benefitted from a very quick pace, allowing him to pass tired horses while making his stretch run. Last time, he was too close to a hot pace and wilted badly, but two of today's foes were close to that hot pace as well, and they fared much better than this 4-year-old. I suspect the rider change to Blanc means they will take back, make one run, and hope the race falls apart—but that's not nearly enough for me to want to hop on board a 1-for-15 runner. GRADE: X.

#5 IBON (8/1) looked good in his debut, winning at first-asking while running down the hill at Santa Anita. It was an unexpected victory, since he was sent off at 38/1, so we'll see if the public thinks that race was a fluke or not. As good as it looked, do note that he got a quick pace to close into, so the race set up very nicely for him. Now he'll have to face winners while stretching out for the first time. I'm tempted to watch one, since I think it's curious that it's taken him 70-days to get back to the races off such a nice maiden victory (partly because he was a vet scratch on July 19). GRADE: X.

#6 DANO'S DREAM (20/1) is a 4-year-old who made his seasonal debut back in February, but he failed to make a dent when the race was washed off the turf, finishing eighth of tenth at 28/1. I can forgive that race—but what I can't forgive is that he disappeared after that. McCanna is very solid off this kind of layoff, but even if this horse is back to his old ways, he's still going to need to take a big step forward today, since The Big Train owns him on form, and his best races don't seem good enough to win today. Also note that Wong was happy to lose him for \$25K up north, so he clearly has some physical issues that will need to be sorted out for him to shine on this circuit. GRADE: X.

**#7 THE BIG TRAIN (5/1)**, the first Mathis trainee, looks solid in here since he has the strongest late kick in the race, and he should be poised to run a peak effort fresh off a February layoff for a trainer who excels with these types of comebackers. Like his rival Dano's Dream, he clearly didn't take to an off-track that February day, so let's hope that things didn't go so wrong that he doesn't come back the same horse that saw him run a solid third at this level two back, mounting a late bid to finish strongly despite having some trouble. He did lose to one of today's foes in that race, but the presence of Bejarano today means he could easily reverse that outcome. Expect him to be rolling late. GRADE: A.

#8 START A RUNNIN (5/1) doesn't need any encouragement to start a-runnin', since he has plenty of tactical speed, which should allow him to be in the vanguard early, dictating the pace if he wants to. That said, he's had plenty of tries at this level, but someone always seems to overtake him late—and all three of his wins have come when he's made the lead. He is fast enough to make the lead again today, but there are other forwardly placed runners in here, so this 4-year-old won't have things so easily on the front end. Note that he too is coming off a February layoff while returning a new gelding. He did just beat my top choice two back when he was nosed out as the 9/5 favorite, so he's obviously not impossible here—but I just don't think the race sets up for him. GRADE: C.

**#9 KINGS RIVER KING (9/2)** looked very impressive here on July 28 when he broke his maiden in stylish fashion, coming from off the pace to inhale his foes and win going away. He had hinted at that kind of ability in a few of his previous races down the hill, so it was nice to see him put it all together when racing a flat mile for the first time. As a lightly raced 3-year-old, he still has plenty of upside—but we'll see if he can exhibit the same kind of stretch run against winners and more experienced foes. I hope he moves forward today because I've always liked him, but this isn't the easiest spot. That said, at least the race sets up really well for him from a pace-perspective. GRADE: B.

#10 JEN'S JOURNEY (20/1), the second Mathis runner, adds blinkers after a 5-furlong sprint tune-up, so expect this 3-year-old to be keen early, pushing the pace every step of the way and setting things up for his stretch-running stablemate. He's never been around two turns, and Mathis's recent sprint/route numbers are a dismal 0-for-24. If this race didn't have other speed, he'd have a shot based on his breeding to get two turns, but on paper, it looks like he's just in here to ensure a solid pace for the stablemate (especially when you consider that he was 81/1 last time when trying a similar Cal-bred level for the first time). GRADE: X.

#11 ELEGANT TANNER (12/1) exits the same turf sprint as Jen's Journey, and he did one spot better, finishing sixth at 18/1. He was off a little slowly that day, so he should show a lot more speed, since his prior two races saw him pushing the pace early in sprint races up at Golden Gate. Frank Martin is solid with his stretch-out runners, but the tough 11-post dictates this guy's trip, so I'd have to think Talamo is going to gun hard and hope for the best—but in a race with a lot of other speed, that's probably not the winning move. GRADE: X.

#12 PLATE SIDE (8/1) was 4/1 in that same turf sprint as his two inside rivals, yet he finished the worst of that lot, checking in eighth after a wide journey. I can forgive that race and focus on his very nice maiden-breaker down the hill at Santa Anita, where he beat Kings River King—but he did get a perfect stalking trip that day, and he was the even-money favorite. Before that, he lost to Ibon, so he'll need to show he can stretch out and outkick a foe who showed a stronger stretch-run than he did in that downhill race. I do like that the blinkers come off, so maybe Mario can get this guy to relax and settle—but the post is extremely difficult, so I'm expecting a very wide journey every step of the way. GRADE: X.

### **CONCLUSION**

There should be plenty of places to land here, so let the tote and exacta probables decide how you want to approach the wagering based on the top selections. I do think #2 POPULAR KID will trip out perfectly in here—and I think #7 THE BIG TRAIN should get a hot pace to close into, so those will be my key horses in here. Maybe we can get #1 DR. TROUTMAN to spice up the exotics at a huge number.